

Regulations for the Degree of LLM by Research

at Sheffield Hallam University

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**Further information and advice on any aspect of these regulations is available
from the Doctoral School, Research and Innovation Services, exts.
4047/4053/2045.**

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M1 Principles

M1.1 Award title

Sheffield Hallam University ('the University') will award the degree of Master of Laws by Research (LLM by Research) to registered candidates who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research.

M1.2 Comparability of academic standards

The University will ensure that its research degrees are comparable in standard with those conferred throughout higher education in the United Kingdom.

M1.3 General requirements for LLM by Research study

Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of Legal study provided that:

- a) candidates can be expected to meet the University's academic standards;
- b) candidates can be trained and supported within an environment which is supportive of research;
- c) the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners in the form of a written thesis, which may be supplemented by material in other than written form. All proposed research programmes will be considered for approval on their academic merits and without reference to the concerns or interests of any associated funding body.

M1.4 LLM by Research award objectives

The LLM by Research will be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research enquiry appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

M1.5 Research Degrees Committee

The implementation and development of these regulations and their associated procedures will be overseen by a University Research Degrees Committee (RDC) established within the academic committee structure of the University's Academic Board (see Appendix A for the Sub-Committee's terms of reference and constitution).

M1.6 Review and Development of regulations

These regulations will be subject to regular review. They will seek to embody nationally-recognised good practice as recommended in the policies, codes and regulations of key external agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency, funding councils, research councils etc.

M2 The admission of students

M2.1 General entry requirements

An applicant for LLM by Research will normally be expected to hold a first or upper second class honours degree which involved the study of law or legal philosophy. Before acceptance onto the programme, a candidate must submit a proposal of between 500 and 1000 words which specifies the research question(s), the body of ideas and the legal or policy issues to be examined together with a brief literature review.

M2.2 Non-standard entry qualifications

An applicant holding qualifications other than those above will be considered on their merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the proposed research programme.

In considering an applicant in this category, the University will look for evidence of the applicant's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. Sources of such evidence may include:

- a) Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment; and
- b) confidential statements attesting to the applicant's academic attainment and fitness for research provided by referees who should not be proposed as supervisors or advisers for the project.

M2.3 Management of the selection process

The process of selecting appropriately qualified and/or experienced applicants for admission to a research degree will be managed within the Research Institute. The process will involve the judgement of more than one member of University academic staff with relevant expertise and experience.

M2.4 English Language Competence

As part of the admissions process, the University must satisfy itself that the applicant already has sufficient command of the English language to satisfactorily complete the programme of work and to prepare and defend a thesis in English. Where English is not the applicant's first language, the applicant must show evidence of English language ability in line with equivalences tabulated below. Faculties will set their own minimum level of proficiency which is determined by the requirements of the subject discipline. For example, in more linguistically demanding research areas, the scores may be higher.

If necessary, an offer of a place to read for a research degree may be made subject to successful completion of an appropriate period of pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes training to enhance performance on the research degree programme above the minimum levels of competence set by the Research Institute. Completion of such training must be confirmed at the LLM1 (Approval of Research Programme) stage as part of the programme of related studies. These

minimum University requirements may be supplemented by additional local requirements in Faculties, subject to confirmation by RDC.

<i>IELTS Band</i>	<i>TOEFL Paper-based</i>	<i>TOEFL Computer-based</i>	<i>TOEFL internet-based</i>
4.0	450	133	39-40
4.5	475	152	49-50
5.0	500	173	59-60
5.5	525	196	69-70
6.0	550	213	79-80
6.5	575	232	90-91
7.0	600	250	100
7.5 - 9.0	625 - 680	263 - 300	113 - 120

M3 Enrolment

All new and returning candidates are required to enrol on-line. This process involves payment of the appropriate tuition fee in return for access to the University's facilities and services including supervision. It is regarded as the formal start of a candidate's research programme and all subsequent key milestones along the route towards completion are related to this initial reference point. However, failure to re-enrol within 3 weeks of the anniversary of the programme start date may lead to exclusion and failure to progress on the course of study.

M4 Approval of research programme

M4.1 Timescales for approval

All enrolled candidates are required to seek approval of their research programme, using the appropriate form (see Appendix B), normally according to the following timetable:

- a) Full-time students: within 1 month of enrolment
- b) Part-time students: within 2 months of enrolment

M4.3 Scrutiny of research programme proposals

Appropriate academic judgement will be brought to bear on the viability of each LLM by Research proposal. This scrutiny will build on the initial pre-admission assessment of the acceptability of the research programme and will involve **at least two** academics or 'rapporteurs', at least one of which must be a subject expert, and both from outside the supervisory team. The rapporteurs act on behalf of RDC as independent assessor of the research proposal.

M4.4 Role of Research Degrees Committee in approving research programmes

All applications for LLM research programme approval will be subject to approval by Research Degrees Committee, acting on behalf of the University. The Sub-

Committee will satisfy itself that scrutiny at Research Institute level has been properly undertaken by monitoring decisions and processes.

M4.5 Supporting programme of related studies (including Development Needs Analysis)

To secure research programme approval, a candidate will be expected to agree with his/her supervisors an appropriate supporting programme of related studies. All candidates will receive training in how to search for materials, identify sources and use electronic databases. Training will be delivered through a series of intensive induction seminars at the start of each academic year. These will outline the requirements of the degree and provide advice and instruction on topics such as academic research and writing, sources of information, planning and organising work, legal research methodologies, undertaking a literature review, constructing a bibliography, interpreting data, academic ethics, and legal citation. Reference to these should be set out on the LLM1 form.

M4.6 Modes of study

When seeking research programme approval, a candidate must confirm his/her study mode ie full-time or part-time. A full-time candidate will normally devote on average at least 35 hours per week to the research; a part-time candidate on average at least 12 hours per week. A candidate may seek approval from his/her Research Institute for a change of mode of study at any point in the programme (see List of Forms at Appendix B but also see M5.2 below).

M4.7 Confidentiality

Where a candidate or the University wishes the thesis to remain confidential after completion of the programme of research, application for approval must normally be made to the Research Degrees Committee at the time of research programme approval (see List of Forms at Appendix B). In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, a special application for the thesis to remain confidential after submission must be made immediately to the Research Degrees Committee. The period approved must normally not exceed two years from the date of the oral examination, however in some instances where publication of the thesis would prove detrimental to the candidate or the University, a further period of one year may be approved.

M4.8 Ethical Approval of Research Programmes

Any research undertaken by research degree candidates which involves direct contact with patients or healthy participants, whether clinical, biomedical or social research, or the secondary use of existing human and animal materials or specimens, must be subject to ethical review. Such reviews will be undertaken

by Research Institute-based research ethics committees¹. As a minimum, candidates will complete an ethics checklist for review by this committee.

M5 Timescales for Completion

M5.1 Normal maximum permissible timescales

Candidates will normally be expected to complete their research programmes ie. have submitted a thesis for oral examination, within 12 months for full-time students and 24 months for part-time students.

M5.2 Change of mode of study

Where Research Institute-level approval is given for a candidate's change of mode of study (see M4.7 above) the maximum permissible time for completion of the degree will be recalculated on the basis of the proportion of time during which the candidate was studying in each mode.

M5.3 Break in Study

Where a candidate is prevented, by ill-health, personal reasons or other valid cause, from being able to meaningfully engage in their research and make progress, Research Institute-level approval may be given for study to be suspended, under the **Break in Study Policy and Procedure for Research Degree Students**. Candidates can apply for time out from their research via the RFBIS form, for periods of between 2 and 12 months in any one application. The Policy, RFBIS and Guidance Notes can be found on the Research Degrees Blackboard Site. The period of the agreed break will not count against the maximum permissible time indicated in M5.1 above.

M5.4 Timeliness of thesis submission

The candidate may submit a thesis for examination at any time within the maximum indicated in M5.1 above (but see M10.2 below) **and in any event must do so within the maximum permissible time**. If the candidate has not presented his/her work within this period, s/he may be deemed to have withdrawn from the University or, in exceptional circumstances, may seek approval for additional time to complete (see M5.5 below). M5.5 Exceptional approval of additional time to complete

Research Institute-level approval will not normally be given to allow a candidate more than the maximum permissible time specified in M5.1 above. However, a candidate whose mode of study at the time of research programme approval was full-time may, with an **exceptional reason**, seek approval for up to a maximum of **12 additional months** to complete (up to 24 additional months for a candidate whose mode of study at the time of research programme approval was part-time).

¹ Details of the University Research Ethics Policies are at <http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics/>. Candidates requiring ethical approval or who are unsure as to the need for ethical review should contact their Director of Studies in the first instance.

The application for approval must be made on the appropriate form (see List of Forms at Appendix B), with the written support of the candidate's supervisor/s. In such cases, Research Institute-level approval will be subject to endorsement by the Research Degrees Committee.

Although requests for additional time will be considered on their merits, approval will normally only be given where it is clear that delayed completion is the result of factors which are beyond the control of the candidate and/or supervisor(s) and could not be anticipated or planned for as part of good management of the research programme. Approval for interruptions to the progress of the research, should be sought via an application for Break in Study (see M5.3 above).

M5.6 Withdrawal from study

Where a candidate has discontinued the research, the withdrawal of registration shall be notified to the University's Research Degrees Committee. Also, members of academic staff, who will normally be the supervisory team, may instigate a student withdrawal based on relevant evidence and sound academic judgment. *Some* examples of reasons for instigating a student withdrawal are as follows:

- lack of progress
- lack of engagement
- failing to meet the required standard of academic writing
- not meeting the student responsibilities as outlined in the University's Code of Practice.

Other internal or external factors which impact on candidates' registration status may also be taken into account when instigating a withdrawal. This could be for example where Home Office rules apply and where candidates do not have a valid visa for continuing their study at the University.

M6 Supervision

M6.1 Size of supervisory team

A research degree candidate must normally have two supervisors, one of which will be the Director of Studies. **Exceptionally**, where the proposed Director of Studies has substantial experience of successful supervision to completion at the level proposed, the Research Degrees Committee may approve the appointment of only one supervisor, the Director of Studies.

M6.2 Required expertise and experience of supervisory team

A supervision team must have appropriate subject expertise and must normally have a combined experience of supervising no fewer than **two** candidates to successful completion at the level proposed. Successful completion of the

University's Research Supervisor Development Programme will be deemed equivalent to a successful completion. However, in all cases at least one supervisor on the supervisory team **must** have successfully supervised at least one student to the level proposed.

M6.3 Responsibilities of the Director of Studies

One supervisor will be designated as the Director of Studies with responsibility to ensure supervision of the candidate on a regular and frequent basis, and to act as the principal point of contact for administrative matters. They will also be accountable to the Research Institute in the first instance and to the RDC for the proper conduct of the research programme including compliance with relevant University policies, eg acting as Project Safety Supervisor under the revised Health and Safety Regulations. The Director of Studies must be a member of the permanent staff of, or have a contract of employment with, the University.

M6.4 Role of Advisers

In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be proposed to contribute specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.

M6.5 Restrictions on candidates acting as supervisors

A candidate for a research degree of any institution of higher education is ineligible to act as Director of Studies for research degree candidates but may act as a second supervisor or adviser.

M6.6 Change in supervisory arrangements

The approval of the relevant Research Institute must be obtained for any change in supervision arrangements (see List of Forms at Appendix B).

M7 Monitoring and supporting student progress

M7.1 Research Degrees Annual Feedback and Monitoring Exercise

The University will establish at least annually whether the candidate is:

- a) still actively engaged on the research programme;
- b) maintaining regular and frequent contact with the supervisors;
- c) likely to achieve the academic standards of the degree at the level in question;
- d) likely to complete successfully within the normal maximum permissible timescale (see M5.1 above).

As part of this process, the Research Degrees Committee will, at least annually, consider the outcome of the monitoring process within Faculties. In the light of this consideration, the Committee will take appropriate action.

M7.2 Supporting students with long-term health conditions via Learning Contracts

The University offers specific learning support to students with long-term health conditions in order to facilitate adequate progress and to meet the maximum regulatory timescale for completion. Candidates are encouraged to discuss their needs with staff in Disabled Student Support and to secure a Learning Contract. Reasonable adjustments will be agreed to ensure candidates have the necessary adjustments and support in place during their research degree candidature and for the formal assessment points at final examination.

M7.3 Responsibilities of the Head of Research Degrees and/or Postgraduate Research Tutor

To help the effective monitoring and support of research degree candidates, each Research Institute which admits research degree candidates will designate a senior member of staff as Head of Research Degrees. Research Institute support structures also allow for a supporting Postgraduate Research Tutor (or Tutors) to assist the Head of Research Degrees in supporting the research student community (see role and responsibilities at Appendix C).

M8 Examinations - General

M8.1 Stages of the examination

The examination for the LLM by Research will have two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral examination (see paragraph M9.2). Reasonable adjustments will be made to the oral examination for students with disabilities.

M8.2 Extenuating circumstances affecting the oral examination

A candidate will normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where, for exceptional reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause **over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life**, the Research Degrees Committee is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination on the due date and time previously set, the Committee may agree that the oral examination be postponed to a suitable later date.

Requests for consideration of such exceptional extenuating circumstances should be made in writing, as soon as possible before the date of the oral examination. This must be sent to the University's Student Systems and Records Team in Registry Services for consideration by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, in consultation with the examiners. The candidate must also provide independent documentary evidence in support of the request, such as medical evidence (see Appendix C for further details). The request should include the following information:

- Summary of the nature of the circumstances;
- Period of time to which the circumstances apply and the candidate's view of the effect of the circumstances on his/her ability to undertake the oral examination;
- An indication of the documentary evidence attached (e.g. medical note, self-certification, or any of the types of evidence noted in Appendix C) in support of the extenuating circumstances;
- Any other effects or anything else which should be taken into account.

The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee and the Examiners will normally disregard circumstances which candidates are expected to cope with as part of the normal difficulties and unfortunately distressing aspects of life which may occur. Their consideration will include the following:

- Severity and timescale of the circumstances
- Extent to which the circumstances can be linked to timing of the oral examination
- Documentary evidence available (as per guidance in Appendix C).

M8.3 Location of the examination

The oral examination will normally be held in the UK. Exceptionally, on receipt of a justifiable case by the candidate's Director of Studies, the Research Degrees Committee may give approval for the examination to take place overseas via video-conferencing or similar technology. However, the candidate must be at the same physical location as at least one of the examiners or the Independent Chair (see M8.5) to ensure they are fully supported during the assessment.

M8.4 Involvement of supervisors in the oral examination

Supervisors may, with the consent of the candidate, attend the oral examination and speak if called upon, but must not participate in the preliminary private meeting of the examiners, and must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

M8.5 The Role of the Independent Chair

All research degree oral examinations from the 2013-14 session onwards will have oversight by an Independent Chair. In line with the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Part B, Chapter 11) the Chair will be a non-examining Chair who may not contribute to the assessment judgement. The overarching role of the Chair is to ensure that:

- the viva voce examination process is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent;
- the candidate has the opportunity to defend the thesis and respond to all questions posed by the examiners;
- the questioning of the candidate by the examiners is conducted fairly and professionally;
- the examiners adhere to the University's regulations and procedures;

- advice is given about the regulations to the examiners and the candidate if required.

Although the Chair will not take part in the formal assessment process, they will normally have the following:

- access to a copy of the thesis during the examination,
- sight of the examiner's preliminary reports before the examination commences, and
- will sign off the examiners' joint recommendation form when the examiners have completed their assessment in order to verify that due process has been followed
- will complete a short report on the oral examination for audit purposes.

M8.6 Recommendations on conferment of the degree

Following completion of the examination, the examiners will make a recommendation on the award of LLM by Research, via the Doctoral School staff, to the Vice Chancellor, who acts on behalf of the University's Academic Board in conferring the degree.

M8.7 Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

The degree of LLM may be awarded as an aegrotat or posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate that is ready for submission for examination (or equivalent published material or papers accompanied by a critical introduction for an aegrotat award). In such cases the University's Research Degrees Committee shall seek evidence that the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place. Please see **Policy for Research Degrees Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards** on the Research Degrees Blackboard site.

M8.8 Procedures for handling allegations of dishonest conduct

The University's Research Misconduct Policy includes the procedure for dealing with allegations of plagiarism, collusion, or any other form of dishonest conduct, A copy can be found on the Research Degrees Blackboard site.

M8.9 Grounds for declaring examinations null and void

The Research Degrees Committee must ensure that all examinations are conducted wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. If the Sub-Committee is made aware of any non-compliance, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

M9 Preparation for the Examination

M9.1 Approval of examination arrangements

The Director of Studies must seek the Research Degrees Committee's approval (see List of Forms at Appendix B) for the candidate's examination arrangements normally **no later than one month** before the expected date of submission of the thesis. The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved. In special circumstances the Research Degrees Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.

M9.2 Procedure for submitting the thesis

The Doctoral School staff will notify the candidate of the procedure for submission of the thesis (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination.

M9.3 Notification of date of oral examination

The Doctoral School staff will notify the candidate, all supervisors and the examiners of the date of the oral examination.

M9.4 Briefing of examiners

The Doctoral School staff will send a copy of the thesis to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form (see List of Forms at Appendix B) and the University's regulations, and will ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.

M9.5 Completion of examiners' preliminary reports

The Doctoral School staff will ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University before the oral examination takes place.

M10 The Candidate's Responsibilities in the Examination

M10.1 Timely Submission of the thesis

The candidate must ensure that the thesis is submitted to the Doctoral School staff within the relevant normal maximum permissible timescale (see M5.1).

M10.2 Responsibility for the decision to submit the thesis

The submission of the thesis for examination must be at the sole discretion of the candidate. Although a candidate would be unwise to submit the thesis against the advice of the supervisors, it is his/her right to do so. Similarly, candidates

should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award of the degree.

M10.3 Satisfying conditions of eligibility for examination

The candidate must satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the University.

M10.4 Candidate's exclusion from arrangement of the examination

The candidate must take no part in the arrangement of the examination and must have no formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.

M10.5 Candidate's declaration

The candidate must confirm their intention for the thesis to be assessed by completing a declaration form. This must be done at first assessment and also for resubmissions. The declaration will confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The candidate will not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated, on the declaration form and also in the thesis, which work has been so incorporated (for example where some of the work may have been developed from undergraduate study).

M10.6 Required format of the thesis

The candidate must ensure that the format of the thesis, as submitted for examination and as finalised following examination, is in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations (see section M11).

M11 Thesis

M11.1 Format requirements

The following format requirements must be adhered to in the submitted thesis as follows:

- a) Theses must be submitted in line with R12.3;
- b) Theses must normally be in A4 format; the Research Degrees Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format (normally for practice-based research);
- c) the size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, must not be less than a font size 12. Preferred fonts are Arial, Calibri and Times New Roman;

- d) the soft-bound thesis for assessment must be printed on the recto side of the page only; the paper must be white and within the range 70 g/m² to 100 g/m²;
- e) double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used in typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used;
- f) pages must be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages. Page numbers must be positioned centrally at the bottom of the page 20 mm above the edge; the left (binding edge) for soft-bound theses should have a margin of 40mm;
- g) the title page must give the following information:
 - the full title of the thesis **in a maximum of 12 words**;
 - the full name of the author;
 - that the degree is awarded by the University;
 - the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
 - the Collaborating Organisation(s), if any; and
 - the month and year of submission.

M11.2 Submission of thesis

Candidates are required to submit their thesis prior to examination through Turnitin on the Research Degrees Blackboard site. For the assessment process, candidates are required to print copies of the electronic file for the benefit of the examiners. These will be submitted for examination to Registry Services in a temporary (soft-bound) format which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed.² A thesis submitted in a temporary bound form must be in its final form in all respects except for the binding, the incorporation of any amendments required by the examiners and the removal of any previously published material (see E11.6).

Following examination and the incorporation of any amendments required by the examiners, the thesis must be submitted in electronic form (PDF/A format) to rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk together with a Thesis Deposit Form. PDF/A is a standardised version of the PDF format which is suitable for the University's long-term archiving requirements.

The candidate must confirm that the contents of the electronic thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except the incorporation of any required amendments.

² For example, thermal-binding which is a method of binding single pages by gluing them together on the spine of a document.

M11.3 Submission of theses in English

Except with the specific permission of the Research Degrees Committee the thesis must be presented in English. Candidates are advised to seek professional proofreading services if required.

M11.4 The Abstract

The thesis must contain an abstract of approximately 300 words which provides a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and the contribution made to knowledge in the subject. This should sit after the Title page and be single-spaced. A loose copy of the abstract must be submitted with the thesis. The loose copy of the abstract must have the name of the author, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, and the title of the thesis as a heading.

M11.5 Objectives and referencing

The thesis must include a statement of the candidate's objectives and must acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.

M11.6 Inclusion of published work

The candidate is free to publish material in advance of the thesis and reference must be made in the thesis to any such work. Copies of published material may be submitted with the initial soft bound copy of the thesis for examination. However, to respect copyright laws, any such published material must be removed from the final electronic copy of the thesis before it is submitted as the Version of Record.

M11.8 Maximum word limit

The main body of text of the thesis should normally not exceed 30,000 words excluding ancillary data and references.

M11.9 Dissemination of research findings

Following the award of the degree, Doctoral School staff will send the electronic copy of the thesis, provided by the candidate in PDF/A format, to the University Library. The thesis will be uploaded to the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) and the metadata will be made available through the Electronic Thesis online Service (EThoS) of The British Library. The Director of Studies will be responsible for sending a link to the thesis to any Collaborating Organisation.

However, in cases where candidates are granted an embargo period, usually of 12 months, to curtail dissemination of their research for other publishing reasons, then the full text of thesis will not be made available until the embargo period expires.

M11.10 Confidentiality restrictions

The Research Degrees Committee may agree (see M4.7) that a confidentiality restriction is placed on the thesis for a specified period. In such cases, for the duration of the period, the full text of the thesis will not be made available on SHURA. Instead, only the author's name, thesis title, research degree award, year of submission, research centre/department and name of the supervisors will be published.

The Research Degrees Committee may approve an application for confidentiality normally only in order to enable a patent application to be lodged, to protect commercially or politically sensitive material, or to protect material which may result in competitive advantage. However, the thesis must not be restricted in this way in order to protect researchers and research leads. Although the normal maximum period of confidentiality restriction is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Committee may approve a longer period. However, where a shorter period would be adequate, the Research Degrees Committee will not automatically grant confidentiality for two years.

M11.11 Copyright

Copyright in the thesis submitted for examination remains with the candidate. The physical copies of the thesis submitted for assessment become the property of the University, whilst other artefacts for assessment remain the personal property of the candidate.

M12 Examiners

M12.1 Size and composition of examining team

A candidate must be examined by at least two and normally not more than three examiners (except where paragraph M13.5 applies), of whom at least one must be an external examiner. The examining team must have suitable experience and expertise, be unbiased, and be clearly independent of the supervisor, of the student, and of each other in order that no conflicts of interest arise.

M12.2 External Examiners

An external examiner must be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Organisation and must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. An external examiner must not normally be a supervisor of another candidate at the University. Former members of staff and former students of the University may normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their association with the University. The Research Degrees Committee must also ensure that an external examiner is not approved so frequently that his/her familiarity with the Research Institute might prejudice objective judgement.

M12.3 Internal examiners

An internal examiner is defined as an examiner who is:

- a) a member of staff of the University; or
- b) a member of staff of the candidate's Collaborating Organisation.

M12.4 Exclusion of supervisors from examining teams

Members of the candidate's supervisory team may not be appointed as examiners for that candidate.

M12.5 Examiners for candidates who are University staff or staff of collaborating organisations

Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both members of staff of the same organisation, a second external examiner must be appointed. This means that the candidate will have one internal and two external examiners to ensure objectivity prevails in the examination.

M12.6 Examiners' expertise

Examiners must be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.

M12.7 Examiners' experience

At least one external examiner must have substantial experience (ie at least several instances) of examining research degree candidates in the field and at the level in question. Where this is not possible, for example in emerging subject areas, the Research Degrees Committee may exercise its discretion by ensuring that the proposed examining team includes an internal examiner who has significant examining experience outside the University.

M12.8 Exclusion of candidates from examining

No candidate for a research degree may act as an examiner.

M13 First Examination

M13.1 Preliminary assessment of the thesis

Each examiner will read the thesis and submit (see List of Forms at Appendix B), an independent preliminary report on it to the Doctoral School Staff before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner must consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraph M1.4), and where possible, make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

M13.2 Examiners' action following the examination

Following the oral examination the examiners must, where they are in agreement, submit to the Doctoral School staff a joint report and recommendation (see List of Forms at Appendix B) relating to the award of the degree. The examiners' preliminary reports and joint recommendation must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to justify the chosen recommendation (see M13.3 below). Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations must be submitted.

M13.3 Recommendations available to the examiners

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend³ that:

- a) the candidate be **awarded** the degree; or
- b) the candidate be awarded the degree **subject to amendments** being made to the thesis (see paragraph M14.4); or
- c) the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be **re-examined**, with or without an oral examination (see section M14); or
- d) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined (see paragraphs M14.8).

Where amendments are required (as in option b) the candidate must submit the corrected thesis **within four months FTE of the date of the oral examination**. The Research Degrees Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

M13.4 Amendments to the thesis

Where the examiners recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph M13.3b), they must indicate on the appropriate form what amendments are required (see List of Forms). The examiner responsible for checking the amendments should normally respond within 4 weeks.

M13.5 Dissenting Examiners

Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Research Degrees Committee may:

³Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they must make it clear that the final decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor acting as Chair of the Academic Board.

- a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner – especially if the internal examiner(s) disagree(s) strongly with the view of the external examiner; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

M13.6 Use of additional external examiners following examination

Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph M13.5c, he/she must prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. The additional examiner must not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional external examiner, the examination process will be completed as set out in paragraph M13.3.

M13.7 Use of a further examination to supplement the oral

A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of Research Degrees Committee must be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it must normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise. Any such examination must be deemed to be part of the candidate's first examination.

M13.8 Outright failure

The Academic Board may decide, on the recommendation of the examiners, that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted. In such cases, the examiners must prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, to be forwarded to the candidate by the Doctoral School staff.

M14 Re-examination

M14.1 Requirements for re-examination

One re-examination may be permitted by the Research Degrees Sub- Committee, subject to the following requirements:

- a) a candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first examination, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee, be permitted to revise the thesis and be re-examined;
- b) the examiners must provide the candidate, through the Doctoral School staff, with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission; and

- c) the candidate must submit for re-examination **within the period of one calendar year from the date of the oral examination**. The Research Degrees Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

M14.2 Appointment of an additional external examiner for the re-examination

The Research Degrees Committee may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

M14.3 Forms of re-examination

There are four forms of re-examination:

- a) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination was satisfactory but the thesis was unsatisfactory and the examiners on re-examination certify that the thesis as revised is satisfactory, the Research Degrees Committee may exempt the candidate from further examination, oral or otherwise;
- b) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination or further examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination must normally include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral examination (but see M14.11);
- c) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was not satisfactory the candidate must be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s), **within 6 months**, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis;
- d) where on the first examination the thesis was satisfactory but the candidate's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was not satisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the candidate's abilities; such examination may take place only with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

M14.4 Preliminary assessment of the thesis on re-examination

In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraphs M14.3a, b or c, each examiner must read and examine the thesis and submit, an independent preliminary report (see List of Forms at Appendix B) on it to the Doctoral School staff before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner must consider whether the revised thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraph M1.4) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

M14.5 Examiners' action following the re-examination

Following the re-examination of the thesis under sub-paragraph M14.3a or following an oral or other examination under M14.3b, c or, d, the examiners must, where they are in agreement, submit to the Doctoral School staff, a joint report and recommendation (see List of Forms at Appendix B) relating to the award of the degree. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to justify the chosen recommendation (M14.6).

Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations must be submitted.

M14.6 Recommendations available to the examiners following re-examination

Following the completion of the re-examination the examiners may recommend⁴ that:

- a) the candidate be awarded the degree; or
- b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph M14.7); or
- c) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined (see M14.12).

M14.7 Amendments to the thesis following re-examination

Where the examiners recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph M14.6b), they must indicate on the appropriate form what amendments are required (see List of Forms at Appendix B).

M14.8 Dissenting examiners following re-examination

Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Research Degrees Committee may:

- a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner – especially if the internal examiner(s) disagree(s) strongly with the view of the external examiner; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

⁴Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they must make it clear that the decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor acting as Chair of the Academic Board.

M14.9 Use of additional external examiners following re-examination

Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph M14.2, he/she must prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. The examiner must not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the examination process will be completed as set out in paragraph M8.5.

M14.10 Use of a further examination to supplement the oral on re-examination

A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the Research Degrees Committee must be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it must normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise.

M14.11 Dispensing with the oral examination on re-examination

In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraph M14.3b, where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the Research Degrees Committee dispense with the oral examination and not award the degree under sub-paragraph M14.6c (see also paragraph M14.12).

M14.12 Failure on re-examination

The Academic Board may decide, on the recommendation of the examiners, that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted. In such cases, the examiners must prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, to be forwarded to the candidate by the Doctoral School staff.

M15 Appeals

The University has an Appeals Policy and Procedure which allows research degree candidates to appeal against decisions made by Research Degree Examiner Panels for final award decisions. Candidates can appeal a decision and request for it to be reviewed on the following grounds:

- There has been an irregularity in the application of the published regulation, policy or procedure which has had an impact on the decision
- There is relevant new evidence or information which the candidate did not provide and the candidate has valid reason why it was not submitted at the time of the assessment.

Further details can be found under the University's Rules and Regulations web pages at

https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals_and_complaints/Appeals%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf.

M16 Complaints

The University has a Student Complaints Policy and Procedure which facilitates investigation and resolution of issues of dissatisfaction raised by students against teaching/supervision or service-related provision. Further details can be found under the University's Rules and Regulations web pages at https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals_and_complaints/Student%20Complaints%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf.

Research Degrees Committee

Terms of reference 2020-21

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose
To be accountable to the Creating Knowledge Board for delivery and development of the University's Research Degree Provision (PhDs, Professional Doctorates, MPhils and Masters by Research).
2. Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shaping and direction: Establishing overall direction, prioritisation and coherence of research degree provision. b. Oversight of delivery: Ensuring that strategic plans and programmes of activity are in place, reviewing delivery of these, and ensuring that emerging difficulties and questions are resolved. c. Resourcing: Prioritising and allocating of strategic resources, and identifying external resources to support delivery of strategic outcomes. d. Risk identification and management: Identifying and reviewing strategic risks and agreeing and monitoring actions to address them. e. Communication and engagement: Overseeing plans and activities to communicate with and engage internal and external audiences with work under the committee. f. Equalities: Ensuring that the equality and diversity impacts of decisions and actions are reviewed and addressed.
3. Specific responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic governance of research degree regulations, policies and procedures regarding research student progression, assessment, and supervision (including authority to approve changes to regulations; institutional oversight of research degree examinations, supervisory capacity and workplanning, and research student learning contract content)

2. Research degree quality and standards, external and internal audits and reviews (e.g. Research Excellence Framework, QAA audit)
3. Home and International research student recruitment strategies, including marketing, portfolio of provision, and collaborations (including oversight of student numbers, income streams, conditions of award, CMA compliance, and E&D monitoring)
4. Student experience and voice (including research student and supervisor training and development, community activities, retention, employability, opportunities for feedback, relations with the Students' Union regarding the student experience, and external assessments e.g. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey)
5. Fees policy, scholarships, and external funding (including oversight of collaborative partnerships, and relationships with external funders.)

4. Membership

Chair	Doug Cleaver, Director, Doctoral School		
Members	PGR Lead from each of the 4 Research Institutes	Chair of Research Ethics Committee	Head of Doctoral Training
	A Professional Doctorate Programme Lead	Head of Library Research Support	Doctoral Policy and Process Manager
	A Masters by Research Programme Lead	Representative from Teaching Quality Committee	Doctoral School Manager

- The Committee and its constitution will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains necessary and fit for purpose. The Chair will lead the review.
- Secretarial support for the Committee will be provided by the Doctoral School.

5. Meetings

- Meetings to initially be held monthly
- Meetings to last no longer than 2 hours
- Quoracy of 6 members.

6. Operational groups reporting to the Research Degrees Committee

- Task and finish groups established as and when required

CURRENT LIST OF MASTER OF LAWS BY RESEARCH 2017-18

Form	Description
LLM1	<i>Application for Approval of Master of Laws by Research Programme</i>
RF3	<i>Application for Approval of the Examiners and Thesis Title</i>
RF4	<i>Notification of the Arrangements for the Oral Examination</i>
RF5M	<i>Examiner's Preliminary Report and Recommendation on a Candidate for the Research Degree</i>
RF6M	<i>Examiners' Final Recommendation on a Candidate for the Research Degree</i>
RF7M	<i>Examiner's Preliminary Report and Recommendation on the Re-examination of a Candidate for the Research Degree</i>
RF8M	<i>Examiners' Final Recommendation on the Re-examination of a Candidate for the Research Degree</i>
LLM9	<i>Application for Changes to Registration (Additional Time to Complete, Change in Mode of Study, Change of Supervisory Arrangements, Shortening of Period of Registration, and Notification of Withdrawal of Registration)</i>
RF10	<i>Application for Transfer of Registration to Sheffield Hallam University</i>
RFBIS	<i>Application for Break in Study</i>
LLMConf	<i>Application for Confidentiality of Thesis</i>

This guidance has been adapted from the 'Evidence to support a Request to Repeat an Assessment Attempt (RRAA) application' for Taught Students under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy

If your circumstances are having a detrimental impact on your ability to undertake an oral examination for a research degree award, you will need to make a case to the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee in line with Regulation R9.3.

Your request needs to be accompanied with evidence to enable us to understand your situation fully. The evidence should confirm the circumstances that have affected you, confirm the start and end dates of when you have been affected, and be from an independent and authoritative third party.

Independent means that they are not personally connected with you in any way. **Authoritative** means that they are a recognised expert for the evidence they are providing. All medical certificates or statements should be:

- written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent to you;
- original, on headed paper and signed by the author;
- dated, to confirm that the date of the illness is around the dates of assessment;
- in English with any translation of supporting documentation undertaken by an authorised translator (which you will be required to organise and, if required, pay for).

Evidence Requirements:

The table below gives examples of the type of evidence the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, in consultation with the examiners, would expect to see to support your request to postpone an oral examination. The examples of how these circumstances can be evidenced are illustrative and should not be read as exhaustive:

Bereavement of a family member/friend	<p>Purpose: to confirm the death. Should include the name of the deceased, and either the date of the death or the ceremony/service.</p> <p>Evidence: death certificate; order of service; letter from a minister of religion, medical practitioner⁵ or officer of the law; obituary notice; newspaper announcement.</p>
Ongoing impact from a bereavement	<p>Purpose: to support the impact of the bereavement.</p> <p>Evidence: letter of confirmation from a relevant support</p>

⁵ Medical practitioner can be a GP, specialist, or a registered professional in a psychiatric practice.

	organisation or network; letter from a medical practitioner ¹ or accredited counsellor. This must contain your name.
Hospital admission	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the date of admission, length of stay and nature of the treatment. <u>Evidence:</u> an appointment or discharge letter from the hospital, outpatient's appointment or A&E attendance. This must contain your name.
Worsening of an ongoing condition	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the exacerbation of the circumstances (not just the circumstances themselves). <u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner ¹ . This must contain your name.
Symptoms of an illness or condition awaiting a formal diagnosis	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the treatment attendance dates, when tests were undertaken and when a diagnosis is expected. Note: this should not solely be related to routine tests. <u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner ¹ . This must contain your name.
Personal illness or impact of prescribed medication	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the dates when the illness affected the student and how. <u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner ¹ ; doctor's notes; hospital letter; hospital appointment letter; image copy of prescription medication (date of prescription must be visible) and noted side effects. This must contain your name. To account for absence from an examination, you can submit a self-certification medical form (found on MyHallam) as evidence.
Illness of a close family member/dependent or friend	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the dates and nature of the illness. <u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner ¹ ; doctor's notes; hospital letter; hospital appointment letter; letter of confirmation from a relevant support organisation.
Serious personal accident or injury of self or close family member/friend	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the date of the accident or injury. <u>Evidence:</u> a copy of an accident report provided by a police officer, Magistrate or Magistrate's Clerk; a formal insurance claim; or a letter from a medical practitioner ¹ . This must contain the name of the person concerned.
Significant adverse personal or family circumstances	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the circumstances being reported, time when they occurred and whether they are continuing. <u>Evidence:</u> letter from one or more of the following: a medical practitioner ¹ , a social worker, a registered psychological therapist, a registered professional in a psychiatric practice, an officer of the law, a teacher outside of the University, a minister of religion.
Impact of natural disaster (e.g. severe weather which prevents attendance or submission, major breakdown in transport system)	<u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the incidence in terms of its nature and severity. <u>Evidence:</u> letter from the police or other authority (depending on the nature of the incidence); newspaper article; evidence of flight cancellations or local conditions

	with supplementary evidence to link the delays to the disaster.
Serious personal disruption (e.g. victim of crime, court attendance, breakdown of a long term relationship, service with reserve forces)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the events reported.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter of confirmation from a relevant organisation; solicitor's letter; letter from courts; divorce petition; written evidence from: the police (including, but not limited to, a crime reference number), counsellor, social worker, victim support, etc. This must contain your name.</p>
Evidence of a requirement for reasonable adjustments provided too late to be taken into account in the delivery or assessment of a module.	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the situation regarding a recently disclosed medical condition/disability.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> statement from a SHU Disability or Wellbeing Advisor.</p>
Personal participation in activities at a national/international level (e.g. sport, drama, art and design, writing)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the requirement for the student to be available on specified dates.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> official correspondence from the relevant organisation.</p>
Work commitments for a part time student	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the unexpected and higher than usual workload for the student which has reduced the time available for study.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from employer on company headed paper.</p>

Registry Services